

Mr. Joseph R.L. Stern
Baltimore Sun
Baltimore, Md.

5/12/87

Dear Mr. Stern,

When I phoned your national desk this morning to suggest a lead following your yesterday's story raising questions about Mr. Meese's truthfulness, it was suggested that I also write a letter to the editor and address it to you. That follows.

* * *

Dear Editor,

At his White House press conference last November Attorney General Meese disclosed prohibited assistance to the Contras who are trying to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. Mr. Meese was asked if he had directed the FBI to investigate. Presenting himself as a civil libertarian Mr. Meese stated that in the absence of reason to suspect any law violation it is wrong for the FBI to conduct any investigation. He stated also that FBI Director Webster concurred in what he had just said.

As the attorney general and the FBI director both men knew other and better than Mr. Meese told the nation. The FBI has always made many investigations that have no law enforcement purpose, some enormous in extent. Moreover, the FBI is authorized to make investigations at the request of the president. In his testimony before the Warren Commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy Director J. Edgar Hoover testified (Volume V, page 98) that "the President has a right to request the Bureau to make special investigations..." If ever a president needed such an investigation, President Reagan did.

And, I suggest, if ever an attorney general or FBI director ought have so informed any president, absent an intent to deceive and cover up, this attorney general and this FBI director should have informed President Reagan. If he did not already know.

Current testimony about this Iran/Contra scandal makes it apparent that during the time Mr. Meese saw to it that there was no FBI investigation, Colonel North had what he described as his "shredding party" when he fed incriminating records into the White House shredding machine.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21701

Mr. Stern, the marks on this photocopy of Mr. Hoover's testimony were made during my own research in late 1964 or early 1965. There are no marks on the pages as published.

will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Mr. Hoover. I do.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Rankin will carry on the examination, Mr. Director.

Mr. RANKIN. Mr. Chief Justice, do you want to tell him briefly what our purpose is?

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, yes; it is our practice to make a brief statement before the testimony of each witness, and I will do it now.

Mr. Hoover will be asked to testify in regard to whether Lee H. Oswald was ever an agent, directly or indirectly, or an informer or acting on behalf of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in any capacity at any time, and whether he knows of any credible evidence of any conspiracy, either domestic or foreign, involved in the assassination of President Kennedy.

What he has to say about an article in the National Enquirer, Commission Exhibit No. 837, and concerning the failure to include the name and informa-

tion concerning special agent Hosty in the initial report of the Oswald address book and any suggestions and recommendations he may have concerning improvements or changes in provisions for the protection of the President or the United States. Now, Mr. Rankin, you may proceed.

Mr. RANKIN. Mr. Hoover, will you state for the record your name and

position?

Mr. Hoover. J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investi-

gation of the Department of Justice.

Mr. RANKIN. Where do you live, Mr. Hoover?

Mr. HOOVER. I live at 4856 30th Place, Northwest, Washington, D.C.

Mr. RANKIN. And you have been Director of the Bureau for some 40 years according to the newspapers?

Mr. Hoover. That is correct; since 1924.

Mr. RANKIN. You have furnished us a considerable amount of information, Mr. Hoover, about whether or not Lee Harvey Oswald was ever an agent or acting for the Bureau in any capacity as informer or otherwise at any time.

Are those statements correct?

Mr. Hoover. They are correct. I can most emphatically say that at no time was he ever an employee of the Bureau in any capacity, either as an agent or as a special employee, or as an informant.

Mr. RANKIN. I call your particular attention to Exhibit 835, and suggest that you will find that that is your letter, together with your affidavit about this subject matter, and other matters that you furnished to us concerning this particular subject.

Mr. Hoover. That is correct.

Mr. RANKIN. Do you wish to add anything?

Mr. Hoover. No; there is nothing that I desire to add to what appears in this letter and my affidavit which accompanied it to the Commission.

Mr. RANKIN. You have provided many things to us in assisting the Commission in connection with this investigation and I assume, at least in a general way, you are familiar with the investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy, is that correct?

Mr. Hoover. That is correct. When President Johnson returned to Washington he communicated with me within the first 24 hours, and asked the Bureau to pick up the investigation of the assassination because as you are aware, there is no Federal jurisdiction for such an investigation. It is not a Federal crime to kill or attack the President or the Vice President or any of the continuity of officers who would succeed to the Presidency.

However, the President has a right to request the Bureau to make special investigations, and in this instance he asked that this investigation be made. I immediately assigned a special force headed by the special agent in charge at Dallas, Tex., to initiate the investigation, and to get all details and facts con-

cerning it, which we obtained, and then prepared a report which we submitted to the Attorney General for transmission to the President.

Mr. RANKIN. From your study of this entire matter of the assassination and work in connection with it, do you know of any credible evidence that has ever come to your attention that there was a conspiracy either foreign or domestic involved in the assassination?

come to the Bureau from this Commission, and I have read and seen all the reports that have come to the Commission.

In addition, I have read many of the reports that our agents have made and

spied on the evidence that has been accumulated thus far?

Mr. Hoover. That is correct, sir.

Representative Ford. Is the Federal Bureau of Investigation continuing its

investigation of all possible ramifications of this assassination?

Mr. Hoover. That is correct.

We are receiving and we, I expect, will con-

tinue to receive for days or weeks to come, letters from individuals that normally

would probably be in the category of what we would call crank letters in which

various weird allegations are made or in which people have reported psychic

vibrations. We are still running out letters of that character and in turn

making a report to this Commission upon it, notwithstanding the fact that

on the face of it the allegation is without any foundation. Individuals who could

not have known any of the facts have made some very strange statements.

There have been publications and books written, the contents of which have been

absurd and without a scintilla of foundation of fact. I feel, from my experience

in the Bureau, where we are in constant receipt over the years of these so-called

crank letters, that such allegations will be going on possibly for some years

I, personally, feel that any finding of the Commission will not be accepted by everybody, because there are bound to be some extremists who have very pronounced views, without any foundation for them, who will disagree violently with whatever findings the Commission makes. But I think it is essential that the FBI investigate the allegations that are received in the future, so it can't be said that we had ignored them or that the case is closed and forgotten.

Representative Ford. Could you give us some idea of how many agents are currently working to one degree or another on any aspects of this case?

Mr. Hoover. I would estimate, Congressman Ford, that there are at the present time at least 50 or 60 men giving their entire time to various aspects of the investigation, because while Dallas is the office of origin, investigation is required in auxiliary offices such as Los Angeles or San Francisco, and even in some foreign countries like Mexico. We have representatives in Mexico City, at the outset of the investigation, following the assassination. It was the desire of the President, to have this report completed by the Bureau just as quickly as possible, and as thoroughly as possible, and I would say we did about 100 hours at that time, working on the report in the field, and at Washington, D.C. Now, all the reports that come in from the field are, of course, reviewed at Washington by the supervisor in charge of the case, and then in turn by the assistant director of the division, and then in turn by Mr. Belmont, who is the assistant to the Director.

Reports in which there is a controversial issue or where statements have been made of the existence of some particular thing that we have never heard before, I myself go over these to see that we haven't missed anything. I never had any say in the investigation so it can be held down.

Mr. RANKIN. From your study of this entire matter of the assassination and

work in connection with it, do you know of any credible evidence that has ever

come to your attention that there was a conspiracy either foreign or domestic

involved in the assassination?